

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DEPOSITING MATERIAL ON A SUBSTRATE

Background to the Invention

- 5 This invention relates to a method and apparatus for depositing material on a substrate.

The invention is particularly, but not exclusively, applicable to the deposition of an encapsulating material on a substrate already bearing sensitive
10 material. For example, a semiconducting substrate bearing an array of organic light emitting diodes (OLEDs) may have a top electrode comprising a layer of low work function material such as calcium. Calcium is extremely reactive with oxygen and water and it is therefore required to coat the calcium layer with an encapsulating layer, for example of aluminum oxide or
15 silicon dioxide, in order to prevent the ingress of oxygen and water.

One method of deposition of the encapsulating material which has been suggested is electron beam evaporation. This involves causing a hot filament to emit electrons, which impact the surface of the encapsulating material
20 contained in a crucible. Under a high vacuum the electrons cause the encapsulating material to be evaporated and transferred to the substrate.

A major disadvantage of electron beam evaporation is the presence of secondary electrons which are emitted from the encapsulating material.
25 These secondary electrons would damage polymeric layers of an OLED such as to render useless any OLED device sought to be fabricated.

Magnetic fields have been suggested as a means of confining the secondary electrons. However, magnetic fields are ineffective when the surface of the

encapsulating material in the crucible is rough or when the secondary electrons have a wide range of energies and/or directions.

Summary of the Invention

- 5 It is an aim of the invention to provide a method of depositing material on a substrate using electron beam evaporation in which damage to the substrate caused by secondary electrons is prevented or minimized.

10 Accordingly, the invention provides a method of depositing material on a substrate comprising the steps of arranging the material to be deposited in a container such that the material has a free surface, and contacting said surface with a beam of electrons to so as to evaporate the material and transfer the material to the substrate, a shield opaque to electrons being
15 arranged to cover a portion of the surface contacted by said beam of electrons, and causing relative movement between the container on one hand and the shield and the beam of electrons on the other hand such that said portion of the surface previously contacted by the beam of electrons is no longer covered by the shield and is exposed to the substrate.

- 20 The shield prevents secondary electrons from reaching the substrate, and material is evaporated from a portion of the surface not actually contacted by the beam of electrons but still subject to residual heat by virtue of having been so contacted previously.

- 25 The relative movement may in particular comprise relative rotation and the container may be moved whilst the shield and beam of electrons are held stationary.

If the residual heat from the beam of electrons is insufficient, the material
30 may be heated by a heat source additional to the beam of electrons.

The invention also provides apparatus for depositing material on a substrate, comprising a container for containing the material to be deposited, an electron gun for contacting the material with a beam of electrons so as to evaporate the material and transfer the material to the substrate, a shield
5 opaque to electrons arranged to cover a portion of the container, and means for causing relative movement between the container on one hand and the shield and the electron gun on the other hand.

The means for causing relative movement may in particular comprise means
10 for rotating the container about an axis.

The apparatus may comprise means for heating the material, additional to the electron gun.

15 Brief Description of the Drawing

In order that the invention may be more readily understood, reference will now be made, by way of example only, to the accompanying drawing, the single figure of which is a schematic view of apparatus according to an embodiment of the invention.

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Detailed Description of a Particular Embodiment

The drawing shows apparatus comprising a platform 1 on which a crucible 2 is arranged for rotation about an axis, driven by means such as an electric motor 3. A known electron beam evaporation apparatus comprises a
25 turntable which rotates such that different materials can be selected for evaporation. According to the invention, this turntable is replaced by the crucible 2. The crucible 2 contains an encapsulating material 4.

An electron gun 5 comprises a filament 6 which emits an electron beam,
30 represented by the arrow. A shield 7 covers a portion (e.g. half) of the

surface of the material 4 in the crucible 2, and the electron beam is incident on this portion. All of the secondary electrons emitted from the material are trapped by the shield 7.

- 5 The portion of the surface of the material 4 not covered by the shield 7 faces a substrate 8. Material evaporated from this exposed portion of the surface is transferred to the substrate 8.

- 10 An optional supplementary heat source 9, such as an electrical heat source, may be provided for heating the material 4.

All forms of the verb "to comprise" used in this specification have the meaning "to consist of or include".